

The President's Daily Brief

22 October 1973



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

22 October 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Israeli forces on the west bank of the Suez Canal have cut the supply lines of large Egyptian forces in Sinai. The Syrian front was quiet. Eight Arab governments have stopped exporting oil to the US.
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Bahrain, in retaliation for US aid to Israel, has terminated an agreement allowing the US Navy to use its port. (Page 5)

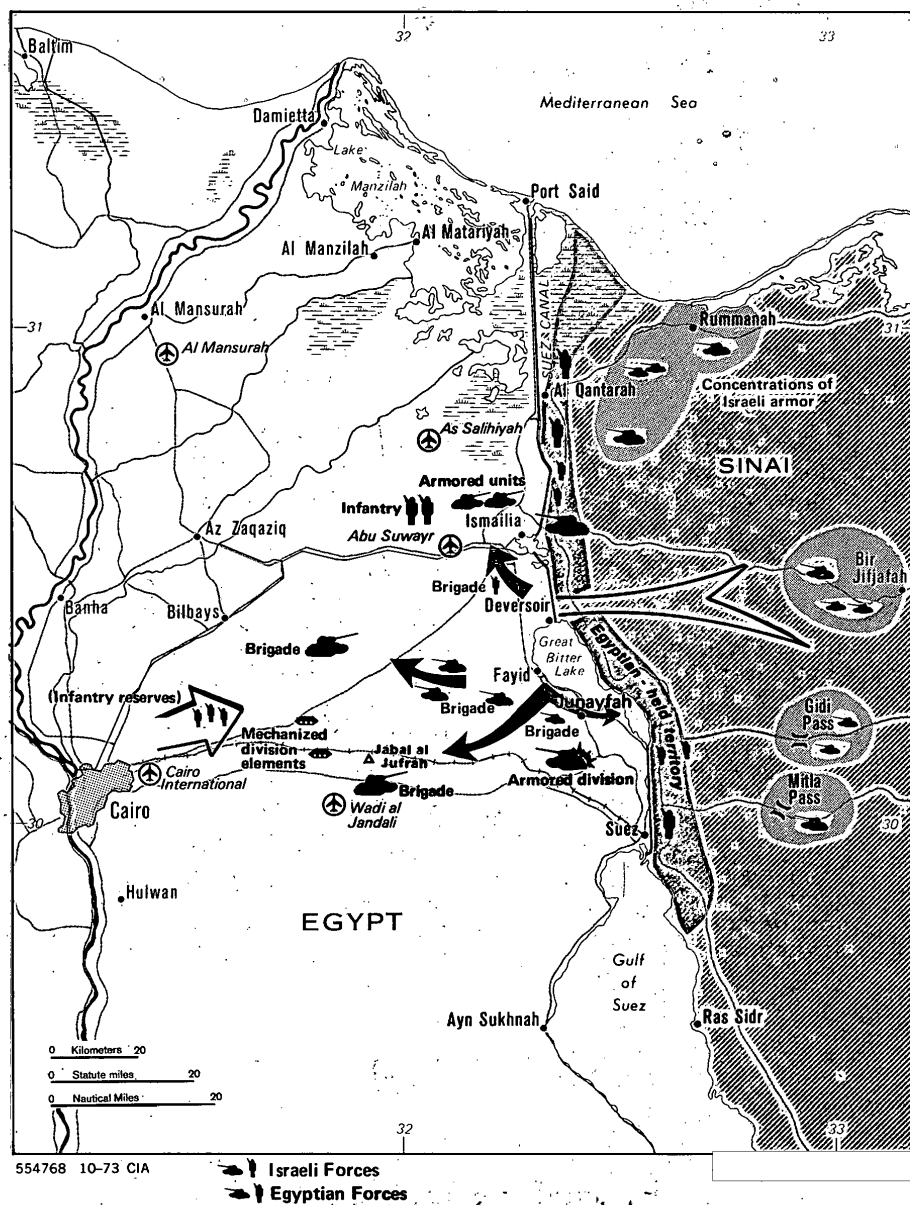
A recent border incident is likely to increase tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. (Page 6)

West Germany and Poland have moved closer to a deal involving Bonn's credits in return for faster repatriation of ethnic Germans from Poland. (Page 7)

Cambodia has a new cabinet. In Tam remains as premier; most members are holdovers. (Page 8)

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Suez Canal Zone



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ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

The three Israeli armored brigades on the west bank of the Suez Canal have expanded and consolidated their bridgehead over the weekend. To date, they have cut the roads from Cairo to Suez City and to Ismailia, thus greatly reducing the flow of supplies to Egyptian forces on the east bank.

Moreover, the Israelis have been periodically attacking a major supply line at Al Qantarah. As a result, Egyptian forces on the east bank could soon begin running short of tank, antitank, and artillery shells.

Supply shortages logically should first affect Egyptian forces fighting in the southern sector of the east bank. These forces are cut off by the Israeli corridor leading to Deversoir, and on the west bank their lines of communication to Suez City have been at least sporadically cut. Lack of supplies will limit the aggressiveness of this force and hamper any plans for thrusts toward the Mitla or Gidi Passes.

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The Israelis appear to be gaining increasing freedom of action in the skies over the Suez Canal.

The Syrian front appears to have been relatively quiet over the weekend, despite claims from both sides that their forces were attacking and counterattacking. A second Jordanian brigade was scheduled to arrive at the front today, but it may not come, in view of King Husayn's reluctance and the UN Security Council's adoption of a resolution calling for a cease-fire. Saudi Arabian troops were engaged for the first time over the weekend.

The Arabs still could again try to seize the initiative along the Syrian front. The Iraqis apparently have been heavily reinforcing their contingent

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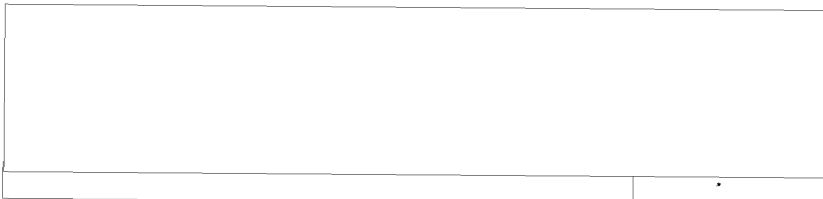
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Israeli Defense Minister Dayan admitted on Saturday that most of the Syrian Army has not been put out of action.

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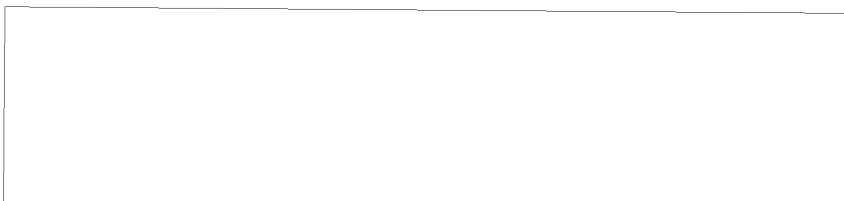


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The Soviets continue to build their naval squadron in the Mediterranean. It now consists of 20 major surface combatants, eight amphibious ships, two minesweepers, and 16 submarines, plus auxiliaries. This is the largest Soviet naval force ever to operate in the area. The majority of these vessels are in the eastern part of the sea.

* * *

Eight Arab states have banned the shipment of oil to the US. They are Dubai, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Algeria, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. Iraq has nationalized Dutch oil holdings because of the Netherlands' pro-Israeli attitude. Yesterday, Algeria cut off oil shipments to the Netherlands.

* * *

The Security Council resolution calling for a cease-fire has been endorsed by the Israelis, with a qualification that withdrawal is subject to replacement of the 1967 cease-fire lines with secure and recognized boundaries defined in a peace treaty with the Arabs. Israel may request boundary guarantees from the US and the USSR, and is insisting on return of its prisoners.

Although Egypt has not yet made any comment, acceptance of a cease-fire seems likely. Foreign Minister Zayyat made no suggestion in the Council meeting that Egypt would reject the resolution; the fact that his Arab allies voted affirmatively indicates that Zayyat had given his approval. Egypt could, however, withhold formal endorsement of the full resolution as a bargaining point in the negotiations.

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There has been no immediate response from Syria, which would lose the most territory in a cease-fire at present positions. Syria was not represented at the start of the Security Council session, and there were press reports that Damascus was boycotting the meeting.

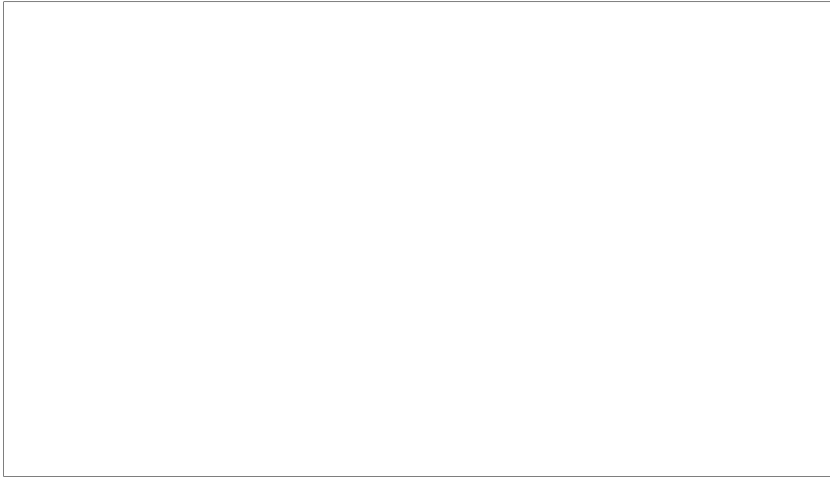
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As of early this morning, fighting was reportedly light on the Egyptian front and was confined to Israeli air patrols over the Syrian front.

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USSR - MIDDLE EAST



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BAHRAIN-US

Bahrain formally served notice on the US Embassy on Saturday, terminating the Middle East Forces Stationing Agreement in retaliation for US support of Israel. The Foreign Minister confirmed Bahrain's intention to honor the accord's provision for one-year's notice from October 20, 1973. He commented, however, that Bahrain would prefer an earlier departure of the US Navy, if feasible.

The Foreign Minister stated that Bahrain's action was prompted by the President's submission to Congress of the "large emergency security assistance bill." He added that the announcement of the Arab oil cut-back had brought pressure on Bahrain, which has no oil, to take some other action against the US.

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PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN

A recent incident along the border is likely to increase tensions between the two countries. The Afghans captured a small Pakistani paramilitary force that had crossed the frontier, allegedly in pursuit of smugglers. Islamabad has expressed regret, offered to compensate the family of an Afghan soldier killed during the incident, and asked Kabul to return the captured Pakistanis.

Kabul will probably react sharply to the incursion and refuse to release the intruders. Only last week, the Afghans warned Islamabad of "very serious consequences" if Pakistan did not cease "provocations" along the border, and they may be genuinely concerned over Pakistani reinforcement in the frontier area. The Pakistanis recently brought a 1,500-man armored unit into an area normally guarded by frontier forces, and President Bhutto's decision to reactivate a road-building project close to the border has increased Afghan anxieties.

Islamabad's actions reflect Bhutto's growing concern over Kabul's attempts to promote self-determination for minorities living on both sides of the border. There is no evidence that Afghan forces have deployed in anticipation of military action against Pakistan, but the Afghans may be training minorities for guerrilla warfare.

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WEST GERMANY - POLAND

The joint communiqué following Foreign Minister Scheel's three-day visit to Warsaw recorded Bonn's willingness to promote low-interest private credits to Poland. For their part, the Poles promised to facilitate the repatriation of ethnic Germans from Poland.

While Scheel was in Warsaw, the West German ambassador told US Embassy officers that the Poles had offered to repatriate about 50,000 people, while Bonn was pushing for about 200,000. As for the credits, Poland was reportedly seeking "significantly higher" amounts than the West Germans were prepared to offer.

The vagueness of the communiqué indicates that the two sides were not able to reach full agreement on either of these key issues, and this presumably is why the Polish Foreign Minister will soon make another "working visit" to Bonn. He was there only last month. An announcement that Polish party chief Gierek will visit West Germany early next year shows, however, that the two countries expect to be able to make satisfactory progress toward resolving the problems that remain.

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NOTE

Cambodia: A new 29-member cabinet was announced in Phnom Penh yesterday. In Tam remains as premier, and most of the members are holdovers. The principal change is the creation of three vice premiers and a minister of state, each with responsibility for coordinating the activities of related ministries. In Tam was given the portfolios for Interior and Religion that he has long wanted, apparently in compensation for accepting two supporters of Lon Nol and one of Sirik Matak as vice premiers.

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